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## WHOLE ISSUE *Nebraska Bird Review* (March 1977) 45(1)

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ISSN 0028-1816

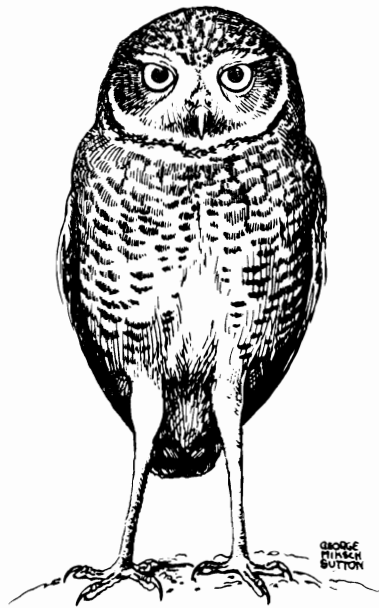
# The Nebraska Bird Review

*A Magazine of Ornithology of the Nebraska Region*

XXXXV

MARCH, 1977

NUMBER 1



*Published by the*  
**NEBRASKA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION, INC.**  
Founded 1899

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Published quarterly in March, June, September, and December by the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union as its official journal and sent free to all members who are not in arrears for dues. Subscriptions at \$5.00 per volume in the United States and \$5.25 in all other countries, payable in advance. Single numbers, \$1.25 each. All dues and subscriptions should be remitted to the Treasurer. Orders for back numbers should be sent to the Librarian, Dr. Neva Pruess, University of Nebraska State Museum, Lincoln 68508. All manuscripts for publication should be sent to the Editor, R. G. Cortelyou, 5109 Underwood Avenue, Omaha, Nebraska 68132.

## 1976 TREASURER'S REPORT

		Cash	Invest- ments	Accounts Payable	Current Account	Total Assets
Balance 1 January 1976		981.42	2,000.00	303.40		2,678.02
RECEIPTS						
Member- ships	78 Active	\$5.00	390.00			
	17 Family Active	7.00	119.00			
	15 Sustaining	7.00	105.00			
	5 Family					
	Sustaining	9.00	45.00			
	2 Student	3.00	6.00			
	1 '75 Active	5.00	5.00		670.00	
Subscrip- tions	13 Direct	5.00	65.00			
	5 Agency	4.50	22.50			
	1 Foreign	5.25	5.25			
	1 Foreign Agency	4.75	4.75		97.50	
Miscel- laneous	Field Record Cards	29.65				
	Check-lists	94.75				
	Review copies	17.50				
	Slides	8.50				
	Gifts	25.13				
	Annual meeting (net)	22.92				
	Interest earned	140.00			338.45	
	Total receipts	1,105.95			1,105.95	
EXPENSES						
Review	Printing	818.35		219.38		
	Postage (includes Newsletter)	65.00			1,102.73	
Officers' ex- pen- ditures	R. G. Cortelyou	45.55				
	Dr. Rosalind Morris	26.57				
	John Ott	14.01				
	A. W. Madison	12.05			98.18	
Miscel- laneous	"Save the Niobrara"	20.00				
	Fidelity Bond			10.00		
	Corporation fee (state)			10.00		
	Newsletter	66.94				
	Accounting book	4.38				
	Membership cards	25.88			137.20	
	Total expenses	1,098.73		239.38	1,338.11	
	Loss for year					(232.16)
	1975 Accounts payable paid	(303.40)		(303.40)		
	'77 Memberships prepaid	518.00		518.00		
	'77 Subs. prepaid	85.50		85.50		
	Excess deposit	10.00		10.00		
Balance 31 December 1976		1,298.74	2,000.00	852.88		2,445.86

**1976 NEBRASKA NESTING SURVEY****Compiled by Dr. Esther V. Bennett**

Data on the 1976 nesting season in Nebraska were received from 14 observers, reporting on 67 species from 15 counties. Counties in the tabulation are listed in a west to east order, with the northernmost of approximately equal locations given first. Numbers represent Nest-Record Cards. Letters are from NOU Nesting Report forms: Y represents young observed; F represents carrying food; M represents carrying nesting material; and N represents nests observed for which no Nest-Record Card was submitted. Forty-eight species were reported on 190 North American Nest-Record Cards. The counties, with the column numbers on the tabulation shown in parentheses, and the contributors were: Adams (12) Elsie M. Helzer, Ellen R. Ritchey, Bernice Welch; Banner (3) Ross A. Lock; Box Butte (5) Alice M. Kenitz; Cheyenne (7) Ross A. Lock; Dawes (4) Ross A. Lock; Douglas (14) R. G. Cortelyou; Garden (9) Mary Tremaine; Lancaster (13) Ellen Clagett, Dick Gersib, Norma G. Johnson, Ross A. Lock; Lincoln (11) Bernadine Cox; Morrill (6) Ross A. Lock; Sarpy (15) Ruth C. Green; Scotts Bluff (2) Mary Ann Banghart, Lydia Bolz, Alice M. Kenitz; Ross A. Lock; Sheridan (8) Mary Tremaine; Sioux (1) Ross A. Lock; Thomas (10) Ross A. Lock.

The following 18 Nebraska species which were reported in 1976 were not reported in the 1975 *Nebraska Nesting Survey* (NBR44.8): Night Heron sp., Pintail, Swainson's Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, Long-billed Curlew, Willet, Barn Owl, Poor-will, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Western Wood Pewee, Rough-winged Swallow, Tufted Titmouse, Cedar Waxwing, Prothonotary Warbler, Dickcissel, House Finch, Pine Siskin.

Seventeen species reported in the 1975 survey were not reported in 1976; Wood Duck, Merlin, Mountain Plover, Spotted Sandpiper, Black-billed Cuckoo, Eastern Phoebe, Willow Flycatcher, Eastern Wood Pewee, Say's Phoebe, Brown Creeper, Mockingbird, Wood Thrush, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Ovenbird, Indigo Bunting, Grasshopper Sparrow, Lark Sparrow.

Persons contributing over 15 Nest-Record Cards were: Norma G. Johnson (81), Ross A. Lock (26), Bernice Welch (26), Elsie M. Helzer (17), and Alice M. Kenitz (15).

Nests or nesting attempts were reported in 1976 issues of *the Bird Review* but were not included in this tabulation for Common Loon (before 1976) 44:34, Swainson's Hawk 44:60, Common Nighthawk 44:61, and White-necked Raven 44:38.

Mrs. E. C. Logan, North Platte reported: "Mr. and Mrs. Harold Cunningham have a pair of Kestrels nesting and raising young in a small martin house for the second season; two young in 1975; one baby this year."

Anyone who sees evidence of nesting - young, or adult birds carrying nesting material, food, or fecal sacs - can submit the information without the use of a special form, although it will be appreciated if the information is in such form that it can easily be separated by species and county. This information will be included in the Nebraska Nesting Survey by letters rather than by numbers.

Anyone who has found, or expects to find, an active nest is invited to write in for North American Nest-Record Cards to use in reporting on the nest (a separate card for each nest except for colonial nesting species, which require a separate card for each visit.)

Cards, instruction sheets, and Laboratory of Ornithology Nest Survey Newsletters may be obtained from Dr. Esther V. Bennett, 1641 Devoe Drive, Lincoln, Nebraska 68520. Completed cards should be returned to Dr. Bennett by 1 October 1977 to be included in the annual report. If persons wish to send information after that date it will be appreciated and sent to Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, but it will not be possible to include it in the state summary.

*City Naturalist, Lincoln*

	Sioux 1	Scotts Bluff 2	Banner 3	Dawes 4	Box Butte 5	Morrill 6	Cheyenne 7	Sheridan 8	Garden 9	Thomas 10	Lincoln 11	Adams 12	Lancaster 13	Douglas 14	Sarpy 15	Total Cs
Great Blue Heron	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-
Night Heron sp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-
Mallard	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-
Pintail	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N,Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Blue-winged Teal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-
Red-tailed Hawk	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,Y	-	-	3
Swainson's Hawk	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	N,Y	-	-	-	-	1
Ferruginous Hawk	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Golden Eagle	1	-	1	2	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Prairie Falcon	1	1	5	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11
American Kestrel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N,F,Y	-	-	-	-	-
Bobwhite	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	Y	-	-	-
Ring-necked Pheasant	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N,Y	-	2,Y	-	-	2
Killdeer	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	1,Y	-	1	3
Long-billed Curlew	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Upland Sandpiper	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N	-	Y	-	Y	-	-	-
Willet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Mourning Dove	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N,Y	7	23	-	-	30
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	F	-	1
Barn Owl	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Great Horned Owl	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N,Y	-	Y	-	-	-
Poor-will	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
Common Nighthawk	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Belted Kingfisher	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Common Flicker	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	F	Y	1,Y	-	-	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,Y	-	-	1
Red-headed Woodpecker	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	Y	2	Y	-	2
Downy Woodpecker	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N	1	-	1	2
Eastern Kingbird	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	1	4	-	-	5
Western Kingbird	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N,Y	1,Y	-	-	-	5
Great Crested Flycatcher	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Western Wood Pewee	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Rough-winged Swallow	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Barn Swallow	-	4	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	N	-	2	-	-	7
Cliff Swallow	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	N	-	-	-	-	1
Purple Martin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	8	-	-	-	8
Blue Jay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	1	1	-	-	2

	Sioux	Scotts Bluff	Banner	Dawes	Box Butte	Morrill	Cheyenne	Sheridan	Garden	Thomas	Lincoln	Adams	Lancaster	Douglas	Sarpy	Total Cards
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
Black-billed Magpie	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N, Y	-	-	-	-	-
Common Crow	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Black-capped Chickadee	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	Y	1	-	-	1
Tufted Titmouse	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
White-breasted Nuthatch	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-
House Wren	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	7, Y	6	-	-	13
Gray Catbird	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	Y	1	-	-	1
Brown Thrasher	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N, Y	1	8	-	-	9
American Robin	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N, F, Y	13, Y	3	-	-	17
Eastern Bluebird	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Cedar Waxwing	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Loggerhead Shrike	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Starling	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N, Y	-	Y	-	-	-
Warbling Vireo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	M	Y	-	-	-
Prothonotary Warbler	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	F	-
House Sparrow	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N, Y	Y	4	-	-	4
Meadowlark sp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-	-	-
Red-winged Blackbird	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N	Y	8	-	-	8
Orchard Oriole	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1, Y	-	-	3
Northern Oriole	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4, Y	2, Y	-	-	7
Common Grackle	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N	-	1, Y	-	-	1
Brown-headed Cowbird	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	Y	-	-	-
Cardinal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1, Y	Y	-	-	1
Dickcissel	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	F	-	-
House Finch	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Pine Siskin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Field Sparrow	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Y	-	-	-
Song Sparrow	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Nest Cards																
Individuals	3	18	8	7	1	2	2	1	14	1	-	46	81	-	6	190
Species	3	11	4	3	1	1	2	1	2	1	-	12	27	-	6	48
No Nest Cards	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	31	7	9	3	1	19
Total Species	3	12	4	3	1	1	2	1	4	1	31	19	36	3	7	67

## WILD TURKEYS IN THE FONTENELLE FOREST AREA

The sighting of two Turkeys on the 1976 Omaha Christmas Count, and knowledge of two other recent sightings (not published) in the area prompted an attempt to find out where the birds might have come from. The information developed in that search is summarized below:

Seventeen Eastern Turkeys, trapped in Missouri, were released at Indian Cave State Park in 1970. There was some production the first year, little or none the second year, and then diminishing reports, all of older birds. Some Merriam Turkeys were released near Brownville in the 1950's, with the same lack of success, and that lack of success also attended releases on the other side of the Forest and farther away, at Ponca State Park and around the Niobrara.

In 1972 Glenn LeDioyt and Bob Mann, who farms the Gifford peninsula, east of Fontenelle Forest, got a setting of wild Turkey eggs from a source located through the Nebraska Game Commission. The eggs hatched, and maybe eight or nine of the poults grew to full size. At first the poults roosted in the trees near the farmstead. They thought the birds would use the woods surrounding the fields as cover, and feed on the grain in the fields, but the birds moved west, toward the hills, and south, toward Bellevue, presumably for the acorns. Ruth Green, Bellevue, saw the Turkeys at various times, fewer of them as the year wore on and found no trace of them after the winter. She assumes they were taken by predators. Loren and Babs Padelford saw maybe half a dozen Turkeys 12 October 1972 on Gifford road, between the farm and the hills. The birds were seen in the northeast part of Bellevue, adjacent to the Forest, in the fall of 1972. Charles Grandt, Chief Ranger for the Forest, saw tracks of the Turkeys that fall and winter but not after that, and he also assumes that they did not survive.

On May 13 1975 D. Andrew Saunders, Chief Naturalist of the Forest, was told by a visitor to the Forest that the visitor had seen three Turkeys walk across the path in front of him near marker 56. The birds had flown up into the trees, and gobbled. Mr. Saunders reported this to Game Warden Nick Bresley, but misunderstood him and thought that the release at Indian Cave had taken place the week before, rather than in 1970.

In the spring of 1976 Ruth Green saw a Turkey in a field east of I 70 but west of the local road running down to Pacific Junction, Iowa, from Highway 370. She thought it was either wild or feral, but was not sure enough to put it on her list. This was not very far from where the two birds were seen on the Christmas Count.

An inquiry to the Iowa Conservation Commission brought the following response from Mr. Kenneth L. Varland of the Wildlife Research Station at Boone: "Eastern Wild Turkeys *Meleagris Gallopavo Silvestris* from Missouri were released at three different locations in southwest Iowa last February and March (see enclosed maps). It seems likely that the birds sighted were from the Glenwood release. Thus far, broods have been reported at only the Forney's Lake release. It is too early to determine if any or all of the releases will be successful." The maps indicated a release of 3 gobblers and 10 hens in Section 16, T73N, R43W, Mills County (northwest corner of the county); 4 gobblers and 11 hens near Forney's Lake, Section 24, T70N, R43W, and 3 gobblers and 10 hens near Waubonsie State Park, Section 21, T68N, R42W, both in Fremont County. The northernmost of the three releases was about across from Bellevue, the southernmost about across from Nebraska City.

The Glenwood release would account for the 1976 sightings, but not for the 1975 one, so Mr. Varland was asked if there was any record of prior releases in the area. He replied: "There have been no official wild Turkey releases in Mills County prior to 1976 and there have never been any official releases in Pottawattamie County. There were two releases in Monona County, Iowa before 1976: one release of seven hens and four gobblers (*M.g. merriami*) in the Loess Hills (Kennebec Twp.) in February 1966 and one release of six hens and five gobblers (*M.g. silvestris*) in Preparation Canyon (Sioux Twp.) in the fall of

1973. Neither of these releases were considered successful and both sites have been restocked recently. It is very unlikely that these birds from Monona County traveled to Sarpy County, Nebraska. There are three possible explanations for the presence of these Turkeys: (1) they were released by a private individual illegally, (2) they were released by Nebraska game officials, or (3) they traveled north from established populations in northwest Missouri. The third explanation is the most likely because birds from Missouri have been sighted elsewhere in southwest Iowa in recent years." Monona County is across from Decatur, and Pottawattamie County is across from Omaha.

But Duane King, a conservation officer living in Council Bluffs, Iowa, while also suggesting Missouri birds as a source for those seen in 1975, said, that forty to fifty Turkeys were released seven or eight years ago in the DeSoto Bend Wilson Island area (across from a little below Blair) and that the birds worked their way downstream. He lost track of them a few years ago, after they had got down to the Mormon Bridge area (north edge of Omaha). There is fair cover almost all of the way along the river from the Mormon Bridge to Fontenelle Forest and he thought that they might be the source of the 1975 birds.

---R. G. Cortelyou, Omaha

## 1976 CHRISTMAS COUNT

Ninety-nine species (twelve more than last year) were reported in the 1976 Christmas Count, and two (two less than last year) were reported as present during the count period but not recorded on the count itself. This net gain of ten species resulted from the addition of eighteen species this year that were not reported last year, (White-fronted Goose, Blue-winged Teal (NP), Bufflehead (NP), Turkey, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull; Snowy, Short-eared (C), and Saw-whet Owls; Mountain Chickadee, Pygmy Nuthatch (C); Winter and Carolina Wrens; Hermit Thrush, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Red Crossbill, Gray-headed Junco (NP), and Clay-colored Sparrow, and the loss of eight species this year that were reported last year (Canvasback, Goshawk, Swainson's Hawk, American Coot, Franklin's Gull, Eastern Bluebird, Eastern Meadowlark, and Field Sparrow). (There very probably were some Eastern Meadowlarks among those reported just as Meadowlark sp., but none were identified and reported as Easterns.) Five of the additional species were reported from locations that did not report last year: two from Crawford, marked (C), and three from North Platte, marked (NP).

The individual count for the year is way down - 30,633 compared to 252,423 for last year - but most of the difference is accounted for by the drop of 105,685 in the Snow Goose count for Omaha and of 99,749 in the Starling count for Lincoln. The Mallard and the Horned Lark counts each dropped about 4,500. The Robin count is an example of the effect of the weather on the reported figures: this year the total count is down, and most of the individuals were reported from Crawford and Scottsbluff; last year most of the individuals were reported from the eastern part of the state.

The columns are arranged in an approximate west (left) to east (right) order, with the northern most location of those of about equal longitude given first. The symbol "H" is used to indicate a species present during the count period but not observed on the count day. The symbol "R" is used in the Grand Island column, since they reported the presence of various species, but not the numbers seen.

Crawford 26 December. A 15-mile diameter circle with Crawford as its center. 25° to 59°, partly cloudy. Seven observers for 39 hours, 14 on foot and 25 by car. The numbers and the above information were obtained from newspaper accounts. For the NE quadrant of the count the following supplemental information was obtained from Doris Gates; she and Zee Uridil spent 8.5 hours each, and Randy Lawson 4 hours with a total travel of 42 miles.



Grand Island, 11 December. Up to 40° partly cloudy, wind from SW at about 15 mph. Eleven observers, from 9 AM to 4 PM. The area covered included Foster's Island and Camp Augustine, along the Platte River, south of Grand Island. Species were tallied, but numbers were not compiled George W. Stoppkotte, reporter.

Hastings, 18 December. A 15-mile diameter circle with its center south of town, 1.5 miles south of Highway 6 and .5 miles east of Highway 281, which includes city parks, Parkview Cemetery, Crystal Lake Recreation Grounds, fields and pastures, woodlands along the Little Blue River, and lagoons west of Glenvil. 28° to 64°, clear wind calm. River open, ponds and lagoon frozen. Eleven observers in 7 parties, 1 at a feeding station. Party hours 18, 9 on foot, 9 by car; party miles 137, 8 on foot, 129 by car. Geraldine Heartwell, Mrs. W. Helzer, Mrs. E. Hurlbut, Mrs. C. E. Kennedy, Mrs. Robert Marsh, Laverne Mohlman, Burton Nelson, Mr. and Mrs. O.W. Ritchey, Carl Throckmorton, Bernice Welch (reporter). Mr. Mohlman saw a Snowy Owl fly from the roadside to a nearby milo field on 16 December. The light was good and they had a good view. A Sandhill Crane, probably injured or old, was staying in the vicinity of Lake Hastings. Corn is put out for it, and it comes to the lake to drink.

Kearney, 28 December. A 15-mile diameter circle centered on the bridge over the Platte River south of Kearney, including Harmon Park, Kearney Cemetery, Cottonmill Lake, Turkey Creek area, Odessa bridge, Fort Kearney State Park, Lynch's woods, and connecting streets and roads. Parks and cemetery, 40%; river bottomlands, 40% roadsides, 20%. 8 AM to noon, 1 to 5 PM. 19° to 45°, partly cloudy to cloudy, light snow by 4:30 PM. Wind southwest in the morning, north by late afternoon, getting progressively stronger, 10 to 50 or more mph. Ground completely clear, river about 60% open. Six observers in 1 party, party miles 74, 71 by car, 3 by foot. George W. Brown, Marian Brown, Jack Unbehaun, Lorraine Unbehaun, Margaret Bliese, John C.W. Bliese (reporter). Norma Radford saw 1 Mourning Dove and 50 Canada Geese on their farm a mile south of the Platte River on 26 December, and the same day the Blieses had 12 Evening Grosbeaks at their home.

Lincoln, 19 December. A 15-mile diameter circle centered at Coddington and West A Street, to include Pioneers Park, about 8 miles of Wilderness Park, Yankee Lake area, Conestoga Lake area, eastern half of Pawnee Lake, Lagoon Park, Wyuka Cemetery. Deciduous woods 38%, weedy draws 20%, harvested corn and milo fields 20%, coniferous woods 10%, lakes and streams 10%, mixed woods and cemeteries 2%. 4 AM to 6:30 PM 29° to 33°, morning clear to cloudy, afternoon cloudy to clear, wind NW to NNW, 4 to 47 mph. No snow cover, lakes frozen, streams mostly open. Wild food crop, fair. The Lincoln area experienced severe drought conditions in the summer and fall, with the only appreciable precipitation coming on 17 July and 25 September. The Salt-Wahoo Watershed lakes were at their lowest level since they were formed, and were completely frozen over by late November, the earliest date that Mr. Harrington can recall for such a freeze. Eighteen observers in 9 parties. Party hours 74.5, 42 on foot, 32.5 by car; party miles 479, 64 on foot, 415 by car. Cindy and David Cochran, Douglas Eno, Daryl Giblin, Ellen and Ralph Harrington (reporter), Norma Johnson, Kenny Kirschenman, Linda and Peter Maslowski, Bob Morley, Lee Morris, Rosaline Morris, Eldon Pemberton, Ken Reitan, Ivan Rouse, Hazel Scheiber, Francis Taylor. The day before the count, 18 December, was 65°. Mr. Harrington found a Snowy Owl on the ice out in Capitol Beach Lake, feeding, but it could not be found on count day in spite of a diligent search. Mr. Harrington also saw a Snowy Owl at Branched Oak Lake 5 December. Four Marsh Hawks, had been harassing it. Robins and Mourning Doves were found in unusually low numbers on this count, and the northern finches and waxwings were entirely missing. One Killdeer was seen by each of two separate parties. The Merlin flew directly in front of the Cochrans' car and they saw it well enough to distinguish it from the Kestrel. Kenny Kirschenman saw the six Fox Sparrows in Wilderness Park in a

---Text continued on page 11



	Craw- ford	Scotts- bluff	North Platte	Kear- -	Grand Island	Hast- ings	Lin- coln	Omaha	Total
Belted Kingfisher	-	2	2	3	R	3	5	4	19
Common Flicker	9	38	21	-	R	13	7	118	206
Yellow-shafted					(R)		(5)	(117)	(122)
Red-shafted					(R)		(1)	(1)	(2)
Red-bellied Woodpecker	-	-	2	1	R	4	9	69	85
Red-headed Woodpecker	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	48	48
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	3
Hairy Woodpecker	23	2	4	1	R	4	8	19	61
Downy Woodpecker	17	20	7	3	R	3	34	156	240
Horned Lark	2	94	3	6	R	10	22	98	235
Blue Jay	-	9	15	3	R	5	48	159	239
Black-billed Magpie	37	5	12	2	R	1	-	-	57
Common Crow	21	38	1	2	R	22	193	156	433
Pinon Jay	74	66	-	-	-	-	-	-	140
Black-capped Chickadee	111	42	16	10	R	61	221	563	1,024
Mountain Chickadee	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Tufted Titmouse	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22	22
White-breasted Nuthatch	10	-	6	2	R	5	30	124	177
Red-breasted Nuthatch	6	1	4	1	R	-	2	-	14
Pygmy Nuthatch	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Brown Creeper	2	1	1	-	R	12	4	17	37
Winter Wren	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	6
Carolina Wren	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4
Brown Thrasher	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
American Robin	313	471	67	9	-	7	6	7	880
Hermit Thrush	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Townsend's Solitaire	7	4	5	3	R	-	-	1	20
Golden-crowned Kinglet	-	2	4	3	-	-	3	21	33
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	-	-	-	-	R	-	-	3	3
Bohemian Waxwings	170	45	-	-	-	-	-	-	215
Cedar Waxwings	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
Northern Shrike	11	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	17
Loggerhead Shrike	-	-	-	-	R	-	2	-	2
Starling	136	1,439	380	290	R	290	1,635	1,782	5,952
Yellow-rumped Warbler	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
House Sparrow	119	615	1,000	175	R	136	3,212	1,818	7,075
Western Meadowlark	-	65	-	14	R	-	-	-	79
Meadowlark sp.	-	-	83	-	-	46	192	208	529
Red-winged Blackbird	47	466	6	1	-	51	74	33	678
Rusty Blackbird	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	4
Brewer's Blackbird	-	-	-	-	-	180	1	-	181
Blackbird sp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	180	-	180

	Craw- ford	Scotts- bluff	North Platte	Kear- ney	Grand Island	Hast- ings	Lin- coln	Omaha	Total
Common Grackle	3	-	3	-	-	21	3	5	35
Brown-headed Cowbird	-	-	-	-	-	-	176	17	193
Cardinal	-	-	4	3	R	7	75	203	292
Evening Grosbeak	27	10	17	H	-	-	-	-	54
Purple Finch	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	6	8
House Finch	-	81	45	-	-	-	-	-	126
Common Redpoll	6	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	7
Pine Siskin	330	61	12	15	R	2	-	-	420
American Goldfinch	260	109	107	12	R	42	256	239	1,025
Red Crossbill	-	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	11
Rufous-sided Towhee	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	3
Dark-eyed Junco	309	95	120	91	R	27	718	816	2,176
White-winged	(56)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(56)
Slate-colored	(100)	(37)	-	(91)	(R)	(27)	(714)	(816)	(1,785)
Oregon	(153)	(58)	-	-	-	-	(4)	-	(215)
Gray-headed Junco	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	6
Tree Sparrow	376	109	114	37	R	63	1,211	1,265	3,175
Chipping Sparrow	-	-	12	-	-	-	-	-	12
Clay-colored Sparrow	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Harris' Sparrow	5	-	13	100	R	54	232	93	497
White-crowned Sparrow	-	12	2	-	R	-	1	-	15
White-throated Sparrow	-	-	-	-	-	1	12	-	13
Fox Sparrow	-	-	3	-	-	-	6	-	9
Lincoln's Sparrow	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Swamp Sparrow	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	3
Song Sparrow	10	3	5	-	R	5	14	69	106
Lapland Longspur	-	-	-	-	-	120	9	-	129
Species Reported	43	55	55	36	38	38	55	56	99
Additional Races Reported	2	1	-	-	1	-	2	1	3
Present but not seen	-	-	-	3	-	2	1	1	2
Total Individuals	2,510	4,804	2,695	898	-	1,514	8,975	9,237	30,633

little scattered group. Daryl Giblin used tape recordings several hours before dawn to attract the Screech Owls. The cold winds drove the birders to their cars and the birds to sheltered ravines.

North Platte, 18 December. A 15-mile diameter circle, centered on the court house. 30° to 60°, clear, calm. Fourteen observers, dawn to dusk.

Other than Mrs. E.C. Logan, who submitted the official report, and Howard Wyman, who sent in some comments, including "Think we did real well, considering that in some of the areas there was a decided dearth of birds of any kind. Our entire area is very, very dry," the names of the observers are not available.

Omaha, 18 December. A 15-mile diameter circle centered at Offutt Base Lake, to include Fontenelle Forest, Lake Manawa (Iowa) State Park, Plattsmouth Waterfowl Refuge, and portions of the Platte and Missouri Rivers. Woodlands 53%, cultivated fields 25%, grassy fields and meadows 6%, parks and cemeteries 1.75%, residential 1%, dump 25% roadside weedy ditches 6%, rivers and lakes 7%, 5:30 AM to 5 PM, 28° to 69°, clear to mostly clear, wind south 4 to 9 mph. No snow cover, rivers open, lakes and ponds frozen. Forty-five observers in 12 parties. Party hours 98, 58.5 on foot, 39.5 by car; party miles 474, 60 on foot, 414 by car. No one at feeders. The Saw-Whet Owl was seen at Gifford Road and the railroad tracks in Fontenelle Forest. Steve Bellinghiere, Evelyn Conrad, Bob Corcoran, and Ann Hodgson were sitting in a car, watching a Screech Owl they had called up. Shortly it flew off and then another small owl lit on the same branch the first one had been on. By this time it was lighter and they could see that there was a dark and light vertical pattern on the breast of the second owl, that the top of the head was round, with no ear tufts. The bird stayed for a few minutes while they checked it with their binoculars and decided that it was a Saw-Whet Owl. R.G. Cortelyou, Jim Glathar, and Loren and Babs Paddford were standing on a road between two wooded ridges in the SE quadrant, in Mills County, Iowa, when they saw two large birds fly across about 100 feet overhead. They noticed the long necks, with wattles; broad, rounded wings; and long, partially fanned tails. They were in shadow, looking toward the sun, so that they got no color. They immediately checked Robbins and confirmed their impression of Turkeys. (Their incredulity was lessened later when they found out that a small flock of Turkeys had been released last spring (1976) not over two miles from the point of sighting.) Dorothy Duda and Gary Lindauer found the Hermit Thrush (it has been reported on previous counts) in Fontenelle Forest and observed it from 20 feet for five minutes, noting the buffy tail, eye ring, spotted upper breast, and the lifting and dropping tail. They also observed the Yellow-rumped Warbler, from 25 to 30 feet away, noting the warbler bill and body shape, two wing bars, and faint yellow patch on the side of the breast. They did not see the yellow rump. The Lincoln's Sparrow was seen at ten feet or less, vegetation by the Platte in the Plattsmouth Refuge by Ruth Green, who noted the streaking across the breast and along the sides, dark eye line, and typical behavior of a Lincoln's Sparrow. Observers (in addition to those mentioned above) were: Rose Andersen, Russel Benedict, Tanya Bray, Sherry L. Bucknell, Patty Burchard, Hal Chase, Tim Cullinan, James Delehant, Jim Fischer, Marjorie Graf, Janet Greer, Mary Harberg; Carr, Mike, and Tom Heaney; Thomas Hoffman, Clyde and Emma Johnson, Gladys Johnson, Eunice, and Joanne Kawamoto, Rosalind Knauer, Jim Kovanda, Marian Meier, Cathy Nelson, Micheal O'Connor, Marie Pluta, John Sealey, Kenneth Seger, Warren Tatro, Diana Vasquez, Tina Wilson, Melba Wigg (reporter), Gertrude Wood.

Scottsbluff, 18 December. A 15-mile diameter circle, centered on the bridge across the North Platte River at South Broadway, to include Scottsbluff and Gering. 21° to 62°, wind NW 6 to 12 mph. River and warm streams open, ice on some lakes, small ponds frozen. Thirteen observers, ten in five parties, three at feeders. Party hours 42.5, 7 on foot, 35.5 by car, plus 24 at feeders, party miles 312, 13 on foot, 299 by car. Mrs. Harry Banghart, Lydia Bolz, Mrs. J.J. Brashear, Sue Dudi, Mrs. David Hughson, Mrs. Lee Kenitz, Mrs. Wallace Marking, Mrs. Melvin Maxwell, James McCole, Mrs. Louis Nerud, Mrs. Ed. Williamson, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Witschy (reporter). Ducks were numerous, but they were on a lake just outside the count circle. The Wood Ducks came down on a large pond just north of the city, which is where 21 of the Canada Geese were seen. The Bald Eagles were seen along the river. The low count contrasts with the 50 that Mr. McCole had counted at Lake Minatare (just outside the circle) a couple of weeks earlier. Two

separate parties found Mountain Chickadees. The Clay-colored Sparrows were seen in good light and the striped crown and brown ear-patch were noted; the Crossbills were seen in the cemetery, close enough so that the crossed bills were easily seen. The Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers and the Bohemian Waxwings had been regular visitors in specific yards for some time; the Evening Grosbeaks were seen at a feeder. Mrs. Witschy noted that the count day was one of the most beautiful count days they have had, but also that it resulted in the third lowest count since 1953.

### **A GROOVE-BILLED ANI AND OTHER BIRDS IN CUMING AND DODGE COUNTIES**

On 2 October 1976 my brother Leland, who farms southeast of West Point, observed a peculiar sight as he rested in the orchard on the hot afternoon. A strange bird was feeding in the vegetation beneath the apple trees. At first he thought it was a deformed Grackle, but on closer scrutiny he saw that the lone bird behaved differently than Grackles, and in addition to these behavioral differences he saw a large tail and the enlarged upper mandible. The bird was later identified as a Groove-billed Ani. He did not see the bird again.

Other less unusual 1976 observations were:

31 January. A male and a female Eastern Bluebird were seen in the southeast portion of Dead Timber Recreation Area northwest of Scribner. Some ten male and female Red Crossbills were also seen in the Dead Timber area. And at another site, Mt. Hope Cemetery northeast of West Point, I saw some 100 Cedar Waxwings and 150 Robins frequently in the same trees. The temperature was in the 30's and the recently fallen snow was melting on the tree branches and tombstones. The Waxwings and Robins gulped down large quantities of the melting snow that they picked from the tree branches.

Some robins were drinking from pools of water in the tombstone depressions and aggressively guarding the pools from other robins.

6 March. A male Common Redpoll was seen in a windbreak of conifers southeast of West Point, and a Screech Owl (gray phase) was found inhabiting a Wood Duck nesting box. The box was in a grove of trees on the farm southeast of West point where my mother and brother live. The Owl was first noticed in February and was seen through March.

13th March. An adult Bald Eagle flew in a northeast direction over West Point. An new Cuming County record for me was the sighting of two Townsend's Solitaires, seen feeding on juniper cones in a pasture adjacent to Mt. Hope Cemetery. Later on in the afternoon a female Purple Finch was seen in the Dead Timber area.

25 April. A Palm Warbler (western race) was seen in a box elder tree on the farm southeast of West Point. The next day a Palm Warbler was found feeding in the shrubs along the northwest edge of an oxbow lake east of the Crowell viaduct, northwest of Scribner.

3 May. A Savannah Sparrow was seen along a small tributary of Willow Creek southeast of West Point.

4 May. A Long-billed Marsh Wren was found in a cattail marsh one mile northwest of Crowell near the Dodge-Cuming county line. In a deeply eroded creek, stabilized by vegetation, just southeast of West Point (one of the two areas in Cuming County that still has some of its original eastern deciduous forest plants, including the maiden hair fern, *Adiantum Pedatum*) a very active Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was seen gleaning insects from the frost-killed shoots of bur oaks. The bird sang noisily as it fed. Two Clay-colored Sparrows were seen in the same area. These Sparrows were the first I have seen in the Dodge-Cuming area in some fifteen years of birding.

8 May. Three Semipalmated Plovers were seen along the edge of a farm pond several miles southeast of West Point.

9 May. Two Tennessee Warblers were seen in the farm grove southeast of West Point and at least two Chestnut-sided Warblers were seen in the same grove. A Palm Warbler (western race) was seen along a farm pond four to five miles southeast of West Point.

28 May. A male and a female Red-tailed Hawk were seen soaring over the bur oak-lined creek just southeast of West Point. Later that morning I noticed the two Hawks had a nest in a large bur oak. I scaled a nearby oak in order to observe the green-eyed immature Hawk in the nest. The young bird was fully feathered and had head feathers tipped with down. This is the first sighting of a Hawk nest that I have made in my birding years.

---Larry L. Einemann, West Point

## BOOK REVIEWS

Wintering of the Migrant Bald Eagle in the Lower 48 states. Donald A. Spencer, "Available from National Agricultural Chemical Association, Washington D. C.," 180 pp., 6 x 9 inches, softbound. No index.

This is a compilation of reports and comments on Bald Eagle, obtained from a wide range of interested organizations and people. These are broken down by topics and within them by geography. It could be wished that Nebraska had been represented better. The only comments quoted are two short ones from the Lillian Annette Row Audubon wildlife Sanctuary, hardly the center of bald eagle activity in Nebraska. An estimate of "WINTER-MIGRANT" Bald Eagles (p.47) gave 150 for Nebraska, but 4-500 for South Dakota, 500 for Iowa, 1,000 for Missouri, 500 for Kansas, 5-600 for Colorado, and 600 for Wyoming, although the tabulation of the Mid-winter inventory (p.52) did not show such a low ratio for Nebraska compared to neighboring states. A tabulation of the number of Bald Eagles reported in the 1974 *Christmas Count taken from American Birds* gave only Scottsbluff reporting them in Nebraska, although they were also reported from *Kearney and Omaha (NBR43:10)*, and a map (p.135) of the larger aggregations of winter-migrant Bald Eagles showed none in the state itself, and only one minor (25 to 50 individuals) area, on the Missouri near the Niobrara, shared with South Dakota and Iowa. A roost near North Platte (*NBR 43:52*) and Lake Minatare (see *Scottsbluff comments in the 1976 Christmas Count report*) would seem to qualify for notice, and the area around Lexington (*NBR42:46 and 76*) might, to mention only recent reports. But aside from these provincial quibbles, anyone interested in Bald Eagles should find this book interesting and informative. Copies of the book were sent to "2,800 university and junior college libraries," to the contributors, and to the organizations and groups involved in conservation of wildlife.

---Ed.

A Guide to Bird-Watching in Mallorca. Eddie Watkinson, Available from M. Philbrick, P.O. Box 83, Vashon, Washington, 98070. Indexed 56 pp., 6½ x ½ inches, softbound, \$3.90.

The first seventeen pages of this cover an introduction to the island, instructions on when to come, where to stay, how to get there by car (from the United Kingdom, unfortunately,) what to bring, guide books to use, local transportation, traffic law, local customs-apparently everything that you need to know, except a course in Spanish (and apparently that isn't too necessary.) The balance is given over to detailed maps and instructions on where to go and what to look for. A couple of strange words-trafficators (turn signals?), unmade (unimproved?) road - add interest. Anyone wanting to take a foreign birding vacation might well include this book in the literature consulted before deciding where to go.

---Ed.

Check-list of Birds of Northwestern Nebraska and Southwestern South Dakota. Richard C. Rosche. Available from the author, P.O. Box 482, Crawford, Nebraska 69339. 15 pp., 8½ x 11 inches, mimeographed, unpagged, no index, \$2.00.

This Check-list cover Sioux, Dawes, Box Butte, and Sheridan counties in Nebraska and Fall River County in South Dakota. It is based primarily on the observations of the Rosches, who were summer visitants before 1973 and permanent residents of Crawford after June 1973, supplemented by others, of whom Doris Gates is one of the six named. Information is given on 266 species, and it is noted that eleven others are shown for the area in other publications. Presumably these eleven are left out because the authors and contributors had no direct knowledge on them in this area. For each species tabulated there is an indication as to whether it is found in one or both states, whether it is regular or irregular, its status (seven classes as to residence and time), first and last dates for spring and fall, abundance, and whether it nests. For most of the irregular species, and for some of the regular, there are notes with additional information. By concentrating on a small area the information can be more specific than it can be in a check-list for a larger area. The list would be useful to those who bird in the area covered, probably so to a lesser degree to those who bird in adjacent areas, and of value to those interested in information on birds of this area even if they don't bird there.

---Ed.

### NOTES

WHITE-FACED IBIS. On 18 April 1975 a White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) was observed at Cameron lake, Rock County as it was wading along the shoreline, feeding. On 28 April 1976 a White-faced Ibis was observed four miles south and one mile east of Newport, Rock county in a flooded meadow, feeding. In both observations the white line at the base of the bill was very distinct. Both observations were at about 50 to 100 yards with the aid of 8 x 10 binoculars and a 20x spotting scope. On 3 June 1976 David Westerman (SCS, Broken Bow) observed six White-faced Ibis at Cameron Lake, Rock County. I reviewed colored 35 mm slides taken of them and there is no doubt of the identification of these birds.

---Ken Robertson, Game and Parks Commission, Bassett

PEREGRINE FALCON. At 7:20 AM on 25 April 1975 I observed a Peregrine Falcon (FALCO PEREGRINUS) stoop on a male Sharp-tailed Grouse (PEDIOCETES PHASIANELLUS) sitting on a dancing ground. The Sharptail "froze" following the first unsuccessful attack while the Falcon swiftly swooped up and over, returning for a low-level attack which was also unsuccessful. Following this the Peregrine flew northeast about a quarter mile and lit on top of a sandhill. Soon two Marsh Hawks (CIRCUS CYANEUS) began harassing the Peregrine, flying past and making "mock stoops". Twice a Marsh Hawk lit within about six feet of the Peregrine. During all this the Peregrine watched the Marsh Hawks and ducked when they stooped close, but never made an aggressive gesture. After about five minutes the Marsh Hawks drifted away. At 7:35 AM the Peregrine became airborne, flew behind a hill, and was lost from view. This observation was made about 11 miles south of Valentine, Cherry County. A pair of 8 x 40 Binoculars and a 20x spotting scope were used while watching the bird.

---Ken Robertson, Game and Parks Commission, Bassett

JAEGER, On 8 July 1975, at about 11 AM, I observed a Jaeger sp. (*Stercorarius* sp.) at Overton Lake, Holt County (S19, T27N, R16W). I was unable to identify the bird as to species. (In his *FIELD GUIDE TO THE WESTERN BIRDS* Roger Tory Peterson says "Even experts let many of them go by as just jaegers.") The bird was flying above the rushes along the edge of the lake and occasionally harassing a passing group of Forster's Terns (*Sterna forsteri*). The bird was observed for several minutes at ranges of from 50 yards to a quarter mile, with the aid of 8 x 40 binoculars.

---Ken Robertson, Game and Parks Commission, Bassett



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SNOWY OWL. On 11 November 1976 I saw a Snowy Owl in Greeley County, two miles north and three miles west of Wolbach. I thought this was very early for a Snowy Owl.

---Glenn LeDioyt, Omaha

WHITE-NECKED RAVEN. I found a White-necked Raven nest in Dundy County in the summer of 1971.

---Calvin L. Cink, Baldwin, Kansas

EASTERN BLUEBIRDS. On 16 October 1976 I saw 15 Eastern Bluebirds along the road that connects Center (Knox County) with state highway 12 east of Niobrara. They were seen in at least five groupings within one linear mile of one another. On 23 October a total of 24 Bluebirds, the largest concentration of Bluebirds I have ever seen in one area, were observed along a road that parallels the west side of Verdigre Creek some 3 to 5 miles north of Verdigre. The birds were seen sitting on the utility wires and all were seen in a single mile stretch of road. One group consisted of 19 Bluebirds. No other sightings of Bluebirds were seen on this trip. Apparently Bluebirds migrate south in small, widely scattered bands.

---Larry L. Einemann, West Point